

DIP in... Alcohol

Safer Birmingham Partnership
Working together for a safer city

Update on Birmingham's Drug Interventions Programme

Issue 1– January 2010

Birmingham's Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) was launched in 2004 to focus upon encouraging users of illegal drugs into treatment, so reducing crime. Now, as the result of investment by the Birmingham Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and the Safer Birmingham Partnership, this successful service is extending so that offenders who misuse alcohol can be referred to receive treatment and support to beat their drink problem.

NOW DIPTAKES ON ALCOHOL



Pictured are members of the team implementing Alcohol Arrest Referral (from left); rear Glen Plant, Mark Southall, Kerry Trinder and Peter Davies; front Alice Sullivan, Nicki King and Angela D'Ippolito

Tackling alcohol misuse is strongly embedded in Birmingham's community plan – aiming to foster safer, well-housed and healthier lives.

This plan is also at the heart of the Government's National Alcohol Strategy, with long-term goals to minimise health harms, violence and antisocial behaviour associated with alcohol.

Strong and committed partnership work is the vehicle for delivering these objectives – and that is a key component as DIP joins forces with the Birmingham Antisocial Behaviour Unit (BASBU), Police and Third Sector Agencies to deliver the Birmingham Alcohol Arrest Referral Scheme.

Under the Drug Interventions Programme (DIP), Arrest Referral Workers have been successfully engaging with offenders who use drugs for a number of years in each police custody suite across Birmingham.

This service is now being extended to include offenders who have alcohol issues and will include assessment, advice and information about alcohol misuse and its effects and encouragement to accept a referral for a brief intervention with a specialist Alcohol Arrest Referral treatment agency.

The DIP has been very effective in reducing drug-related crime in Birmingham – and now the target is

to have a similar impact in cutting the harm that alcohol causes in the city's communities.

The two-year pilot Alcohol Arrest Referral Scheme started on October 12th 2009 in Police Operational Command Units at Steelhouse Lane, Kings Heath and Sutton Coldfield.

It will be operational city-wide from January 18th 2010, supporting the City Council and local Primary Care Trusts' strategic priorities.

"DIP has a proven record in helping people to address their drug abuse and we are focused upon replicating this success with those people who have alcohol issues," said Mike Quinn, DIP Project Manager.



Mike Quinn

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THE A-TEAM GETS GOING

The Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners trust (RAPt), in partnership with the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO), is recruiting two new members of staff in readiness for the expansion of the Alcohol Arrest Referral Scheme throughout the city.



Nicki King

The A-team – as they call themselves – offer two sessions to screen and offer advice to offenders directed to them through the Arrest Referral Scheme.

“Our sessions are tailored to the needs of the individual and if, after the two sessions, it is felt the client may benefit from additional help, they can be referred to our primary care alcohol service or to other agencies”, said Nicki King, Service Manager of RAPt-NACRO.

RAPt started out as a drug rehabilitation unit at a prison – but its role in Bournville is as a treatment service for the Alcohol Arrest Referral sessions and to provide one-to-one sessions to patients within GP surgeries and other community settings.

The Alcohol Arrest Referral sessions are held at RAPt-NACRO headquarters in Bournville.

“Our challenge is to engage the offenders who are referred to us” said Nicki. “They are targeted to come to us because they have committed a crime, so it’s a different incentive to those referred through our primary care service, where the reason is generally the impact alcohol is having on their health”.

THE SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT



DIP’s Single Point of Contact (SPC) is the central ‘brain’ of the organisation, receiving referrals into the programme, providing information to professionals and service users and making sure that all referrals are signposted to the right treatment agency.



Alice Sullivan

The seven-strong team working in the SPC includes Alice Sullivan, who has been appointed as Advice and Referral Officer for Alcohol, and Peter Davies, Alcohol Worker.



Peter Davies

treatment agency,” said Mark Southall, Manager for the SPC and now also Deputy Programme Manager,

“There is a lot more awareness now of drinking as an issue but a lot of people don’t know where to go for help.

“The 0800 number is now available for people to call us for advice and we always try to help.”

The SPC is open from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays and, besides helping to make sure that the Arrest Referral schemes for drugs and alcohol are running smoothly, takes calls from the general public on 0800 073 0817.

“Even if someone does not fit into the criteria for arrest referral we will try to refer them to the appropriate



Mark Southall

AQUARIUS COMES OF AGE

Aquarius has been providing services to reach out to people across the West Midlands whose lives have been affected by alcohol misuse since 1977.

It is now one of the two treatment agencies commissioned to deliver brief interventions for the new Birmingham Alcohol Arrest Referral Scheme.

Glen Plant, Senior Practitioner Criminal Justice for Aquarius in Birmingham, had previously set up and worked with an alcohol arrest referral scheme with Aquarius Dudley, which has been running for nine years.

"We did a comparison between 100 offenders who had been seen by the arrest referral scheme in Dudley to 100 similar offenders in another area where there was no such scheme," said Glen.

"Reoffending by those in Dudley was found to be 49% less than in the other area – and alcohol-related offences by those people were down by 12%.

"We are hoping for similar successes in the scheme in Birmingham."

Glen added: "The scheme shows that alcohol is now being recognised as a factor in a large number of people being arrested."



Glen Plant

ARREST REFERRAL WORKERS SPREAD THEIR WINGS

The DIP's 33 Arrest Referral Workers, who are well used to engaging offenders who misuse drugs, have now undergone alcohol awareness training so they know how best to deal with those who have alcohol issues.

A further six workers are now being recruited due to the expansion to deal with offenders who have alcohol issues.

The team has also extended its opening hours, which are now 7am to 10pm Mondays to Sundays.

Kerry Trinder, Alcohol Arrest Referral Co-coordinator, has a degree in sociology and has been working in arrest referral for seven years.



Kerry Trinder

Kerry said: "At the moment, offenders' involvement in the Alcohol Arrest Referral Scheme is voluntary – but we are looking at developing it so that there will be a mandatory element.

"It could be that some offenders would be offered a caution on condition that they engaged in a certain number of treatment sessions."

IN THE COURTS

The DIP's Court Team has also geared up to make sure that additional opportunities are taken to engage appropriate offenders in alcohol treatment as they progress through the criminal justice system.

Angela D'Ippolito, previously Senior Probation Officer for the Court DIP team, who became Deputy Programme Manager for DIP in early January, said: "We can identify people who have an alcohol problem as they appear in court and screen them to try to engage them.

"Our court team will produce a brief progress report and an offender's engagement in alcohol treatment sessions will inform the sentencing process, which should provide an incentive to clients to get involved."



Angela D'Ippolito

REDUCING DRINK-RELATED CRIME

Each month, on average, Birmingham records approximately 520 alcohol-related crimes, such as assaults, anti-social behaviour, public order offences, drinking and driving, domestic violence and vandalism.

“Once Alcohol Arrest Referral is fully implemented we have a target to engage 80% of alcohol related offenders into the scheme,” said Liz Smith, DIP Programme Manager.



Liz Smith

“We are now piloting the introduction of a scheme so that, when someone is arrested for such a crime, they are seen by an Arrest Referral Worker, who will discuss and assess their drinking behaviour and try to motivate them to think about their alcohol consumption and how it impacts on all aspects of their lives.

“The object is that this will encourage them to want to change their drinking levels and patterns and so improve their own lives and those of the

families and other people around them affected by their behaviour.”

For those who need it, alcohol treatment agencies Aquarius or the Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners trust – National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (RAPt - NACRO) will carry out a more in-depth assessment and offer access to appropriate specialist treatment.

For the majority of service users the initial contact with the Alcohol Arrest Referral Scheme will be in the police custody suite.

The Arrest Referral Worker will undertake an initial assessment, provide advice and information about alcohol and encourage the offender to agree to a referral for brief intervention with one of the specialist Alcohol Arrest Referral treatment agencies.

BASBU

We are also strengthening our links with the Birmingham Antisocial Behaviour Unit and BASBU staff will refer their service users via the agreed Alcohol Arrest Referral pathway.

The project will enable people to undergo an in-depth assessment and further treatment if needed via access to the full range of alcohol treatment available in the community.

“We can also track offenders through the criminal justice system, offering further opportunities to encourage them into treatment,” said Angela D’Ippolito, Deputy Programme Manager for DIP.

“At present involvement with Alcohol Arrest Referral is voluntary and we are working with partner agencies to explore ways of utilising legislation to introduce mandatory requirements to increase engagement.

“Our aim is for an 11% reduction in alcohol-related offences by 2011, compared to three years earlier, and to cut down by 15% on drunk and rowdy behaviour, which is a problem in so many of our more deprived neighbourhoods.”

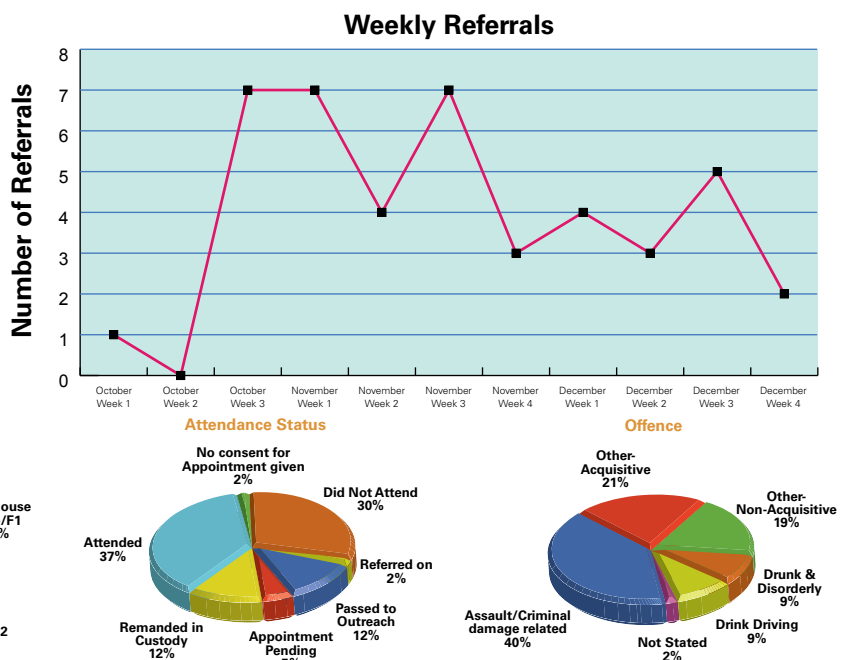
It is envisaged that, besides reducing crime, the scheme will help to cut down the high number of alcohol-related admissions to hospital across the city.

THE PILOT SO FAR

Between October 12th and December 31st 2009 a total of 43 offenders had been referred to Aquarius or RAPt – NACRO, the two treatment agencies commissioned to provide brief interventions.

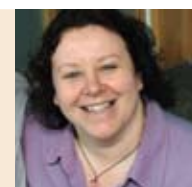
Of those, 17 had been arrested for assault or criminal damage, eight for acquisitive offences and three each for drunk and disorderly or drink driving.

Thirteen (30%) did not attend the appointments given and one of the challenges for the project is to increase the number who do engage with the treatment offered.



Mike Quinn
DIP Project Manager

YOU CAN CONTACT DIP ROUND-THE-CLOCK
 Contact Single Point of Contact 0121 465 4970 (office hours)
DIP ALCOHOL LINE (9am - 5pm) 0800 073 0817
 Out of hours DIP Information Helpline 0800 073 2052



Liz Smith
DIP Programme Manager